



CONNECTICUT INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITIES, INC. SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS

"HEALTHY KIDS MAKE BETTER LEARNERS"

Testimony in Opposition to HB 7027, *An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2019*

Senator Gerratana, Representative Dillon, Senator Somers, Representative Walker, Senator Osten, and Senator Formica and members of the Committee. My name is Melanie Bonjour, and I am Program Manager for five School Based Health Centers (SBHCs), operated under the umbrella of Connecticut Institute For Communities, Inc. Greater Danbury Community Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center. My SBHC sites are located in three Danbury public schools, a State Technical School and in Newtown Middle School.

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to HB 7027, most notably the reductions to School Based Health Center line item in the Department of Public Health budget.

SBHC's make a significant positive difference in the lives of CT's children. Attached are a selection of testimonials recently written by students who have utilized the SBHC services at the Newtown Middle School SBHC. Their honest and heartfelt words about the benefits of the health centers go far beyond what I can say to illustrate the enormous impact the staff and services have made in their emotional well-being of these fragile children.

School based health centers provide core social services with proven results. Services are delivered where the children are - in school - and provide immediate access to care for many serious health issues that impact school performance and academic success. SBHCs are one of the *most cost-effective* ways to keep children healthy and attending school so they can continue to learn.

If the Governor's proposed budget is adopted, these SBHC sites will experience reduced hours of operation, likely closing before the end of the school year, and it is not unlikely that these vulnerable children will experience relapse in their conditions.

On behalf of CT SBHC, I respectfully ask you and the entire State Legislature take action to continue to help children by maintaining the current SBHC DPH budget line item.

Thank you for your time and attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Bonjour". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Melanie Bonjour
SBHC Program Manager
CT Institute For Communities, Inc.

BonjourM@ct-institute.org

(203) 743-9760 ext. 404

The NMS SBHC needs your support

Please write a testimonial about the School Based Health Center on the form below.

GRADE: 7

AGE: 12

Circle: MALE FEMALE

The SBHC is a rock. It's firm. It is a light in my depressing world of darkness and anger. Kids like me we visit this place. We only come here during the day because we don't have TIME to go to a psychiatrist/counselor during the week, and we TRUST these people. As for the doctor/information writer at the SBHC, she keeps us going and says we can do things we can. The NMS SBHC is something ~~we~~ I need. Something WE need. Something really everybody needs. It is here. It is health. It's our life. Don't take it away from us please. That's all I can say. Please.

The NMS SBHC needs your support

Please write a testimonial about the School Based Health Center on the form below.

GRADE: 8

AGE: 13

Circle: MALE

FEMALE

The School Based Health Center has helped me a lot. When I first started going there I was actually very depressed and had rock bottom self-esteem. Since I've started going there I've become more confident and I know how to handle rough life scenarios. My whole life I've had friend issues and they've only gotten worse. Sometimes they get so bad that I would scratch my forearms or become very suicidal, even my trust issues have gotten better and it's all because of the School Based Health Center. The SBHC has helped me in so many ways and has become something I almost depend on completely. My friends depend on it to, and there's students in my school who may desperately need help but don't know it yet. My brother will need it next year. US students at NMS need the SBHC in our lives.

The NMS SBHC needs your support

Please write a testimonial about the School Based Health Center on the form below.

GRADE: 8

AGE: 13

Circle: MALE

FEMALE

The Schoolbased health Center
gives support to me and other
peers. Walking in here happy or sad
they have a smile on their
faces and are always glad to talk
to you. No matter the
circumstance they are willing to
help. They have seen everything so
they don't feel the need to
judge.

The NMS SBHC needs your support

Please write a testimonial about the School Based Health Center on the form below.

GRADE: 7

AGE: 12

Circle: MALE FEMALE

I like coming to the SBHC because I feel support when I need it. Even if nothing is wrong a small check-in feels good. Mrs. Sawyer has a full schedule. She helps kids 24/7 taking away this resource will make kids very upset.

The NMS SBHC needs your support

Please write a testimonial about the School Based Health Center on the form below.

GRADE: 7

AGE: 12

Circle: MALE

FEMALE

The school based health center really helps me.
when I have a problem I talk about it here with
Mrs. Sewer and the rest of the group. but I don't
think it should close because other people (kids)
could use ~~the~~ these resources to help with their problems.

The NMS SBHC needs your support

Please write a testimonial about the School Based Health Center on the form below.

GRADE: 7

AGE: 12

Circle: MALE

FEMALE

The SBHC has helped me with a lot of struggles I've had this year dealing with drama and bullying. Also when I was feeling sick I came here and APRN Wearing helped me with her clean tools that were very nice and she helped me feel better. Ms. Sawyer is super nice and has always shown that she cares about the students wants and needs. Overall the SBHC is a great place to be when you have any issues or just want to talk. Everyone that comes to the SBHC always leaves with a smile and a weight off their shoulders.

The NMS SBHC needs your support

Please write a testimonial about the School Based Health Center on the form below.

GRADE: 8

AGE: 14

Circle: MALE

FEMALE

The school based health center is
always there for me if I need a shoulder
to lean on. I can come to the SBHC
if I am not feeling well or just need someone
to talk to in general. Being a part of
the SBHC makes me feel very safe
and in a good environment. Mrs. Sawyer &
Mrs. Nancy are so warm & welcoming. Everytime
I walk in the door I'm greeted with a
big smile Mrs. Nicole will do anything to
get you fixed up & feeling well. Overall
the SBHC is a loving, welcoming place that
any student should be able to confidently
walk in and get their problems handled.

The NMS SBHC needs your support

Please write a testimonial about the School Based Health Center on the form below.

GRADE:

7

AGE:

12

Circle:

MALE

FEMALE

It helps me when I talk
to people and I like talking to
her